DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 849 PS 031 055

TITLE	Voices for Illinois Children: Every Child Counts, 2001 Annual Report.
INSTITUTION	Voices for Illinois Children, Chicago.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	11p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Voices for Illinois Children, 208 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 1490, Chicago, IL 60604-1103. Tel: 312-456-0600; Fax: 312-456-0088; e-mail: info@voices4kids.org; Web site: http://www.voices4kids.org. For full text: http://www.voices4kids.org/ annreport01.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Annual Reports; Brain; *Child Advocacy; Donors; *Family Programs; Family Support; Financial Support; Money Management; Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS	Brain Development; Illinois; Public Information Campaigns; *Voices for Illinois Children

ABSTRACT

This annual report of the child advocacy organization "Voices for Illinois Children" presents activity and financial information for 2001. The report opens with a letter from the President and Board chair, highlighting the organization's activities, which include: educating the public about early learning and brain development, changing public policy to benefit children and families, and working in communities to build a stronger advocacy network. The remainder of the report lists foundations and corporations providing support for the organization; financial statements; a list of members of the board of directors, associates board, and staff and interns; and a list of board committees and advisory committees. (HTH)

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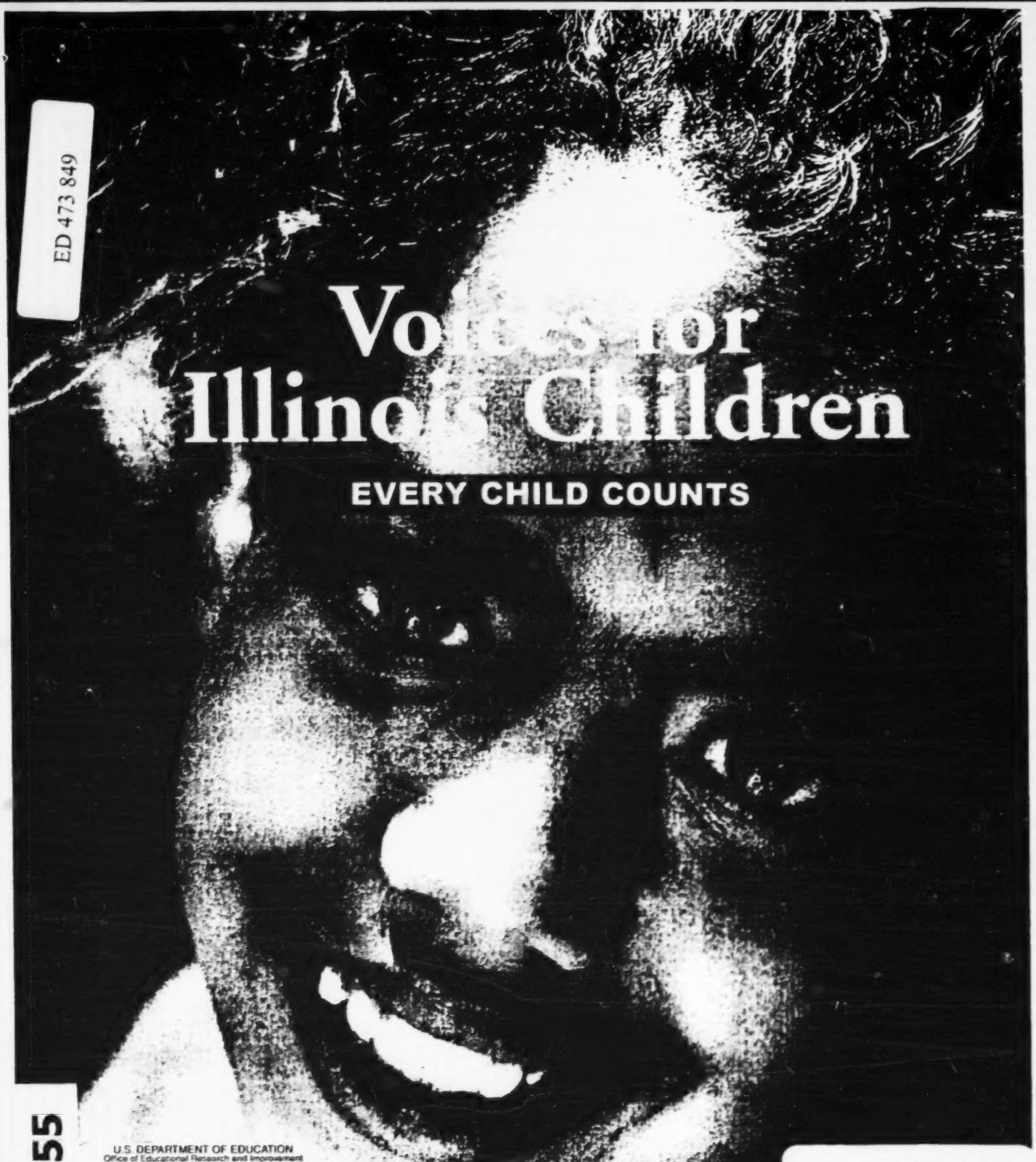

Voices for Illinois Children

EVERY CHILD COUNTS

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2001 Annual Report

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EVERY CHILD COUNTS

Every child in Illinois deserves the opportunity to succeed. That means providing them with the best start in life – good health, a quality education, safe homes and communities and strong, stable families.

For children to do well, their families must do well. And for families to do well, it takes support from individuals, communities, business and government. We must all continue to work together to help children realize their potential and fulfill their dreams.

With the help of fellow advocates, partners and many other supporters we were able to encourage more people to speak up for children in 2001. We used our resources to educate the public on the importance of early childhood learning. And our donors were vital in motivating more communities to take action and get involved in the lives of Illinois' children and families.

Because of your dedication, Illinois has shown signs of improvement. There are more children receiving health insurance from KidCare and Medicaid, and welfare dependency and child poverty rates have dramatically dropped. Yet conditions for children are changing.

During the fall 2001 legislative veto session, we began to see the effect of the economic hardship the nation has been suffering. We were presented with some tough challenges and were able to work through them by preserving funding for child care subsidies, among other issues. But our work to preserve critical supports for children will continue.

Educating the Public About Starting Early

We spread the word about the important learning and development that occurs during a child's first years in two major ways in 2001.

First, a high-profile paid advertising campaign used TV, radio, print and billboard ads to address the need for high-quality early childhood education. With funding from the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the campaign was able to build greater support for quality early childhood programs. This was the first time anyone has been able to commit this kind of money to televise ads about the importance of early childhood education.

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Second, we saw our public awareness efforts begin to make a difference in a second statewide survey conducted at the close of the ad campaign. The poll's results showed that we have changed public opinion for the better for children and families.

Seventy-one percent of those polled in 2001 recognized birth to 3 is the most important stage for developing a child's capacity to learn, up from 51 percent in the 2000 poll. Support for investing public funds in early childhood education also is growing. In 2001, 45 percent of respondents said investing in the years birth to 5 is the best time to improve children's learning experiences, up from 32 percent.

We also worked to get the word out about how to encourage a baby's development to more than 90,000 parents, creating a network of more than 400 provider organizations throughout the state. These are all strong indications that our efforts have been noticed and are getting across to the public.

Changing Public Policy to Benefit Children and Families

We are making progress towards improving the lives of children, but much work remains. In 2001, Illinois made important steps in improving children's lives. Funding was increased for school-based preKindergarten programs and a new program was created that offers bonuses to early childhood teachers who continue their education. Through our efforts, Healthy Families Illinois, an initiative to provide voluntary home visiting for new parents throughout the state, was able to receive more funding.

With the support of parents and other community groups, we averted potentially harmful changes to the state's program for disabled preschoolers by providing advocacy and leadership at a time of crisis. We created a number of media and advocacy strategies to raise awareness and worked with the Illinois Department of Human Services, key legislators and parents to secure sufficient funding.

We also co-sponsored meetings on welfare reform across Illinois and educated the public on how welfare reform has worked and the federal reauthorization process.

Access to high-quality preschool for children has always been one of our goals. Research has proven that children who begin learning at an earlier age go on to be ready for school and become successful adults. In 2001, we were able to express these beliefs by participating in the statewide Task Force on Universal Access to Preschoool.

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We took a leading role in the task force's work, engaging hundreds of people at a series of statewide forums. The task force's recommendations will help create a blueprint as we move towards expanding access to and quality of preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents choose to participate.

Working in Communities to Build a Stronger Advocacy Network

Using the *Charter for Illinois Children* as a model, we have been able to engage more people in efforts to speak out on behalf of children and to improve policies and programs that affect children and families. We've achieved this through advocacy, policy change and community involvement.

Together we have voiced our concerns and raised awareness through our regular Action Alerts, regional meetings, materials and videos. We've also actively promoted policies that support parents as children's first teachers and helped build awareness of and support for community schools that provide services beyond the traditional school day.

Your continued support has made all of this possible. By speaking out, we have educated more Illinois citizens on the importance of children and families. Through our actions, we have helped to implement important policies and programs. And working together, we have strengthened Illinois families and communities.

With the current state budget crisis, the coming years will be a challenge. It is because of your encouragement, support and actions that we feel confident that our best efforts will make an impact on the decisions that our legislators will make. Through our advocacy efforts, we can make a difference by speaking up for children because we know that every child counts.

All Illinois children deserve a bright future. The future of our state depends on the investments we make today. So let's do all we can to make sure we get the biggest return on smart investments.

Jerome Stermer, President

James J. Mitchell III, Board Chair

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Foundation & Corporate Support

Voices for Illinois Children is a tax-exempt corporation under Internal Revenue Service code section 501(c)(3) and is not classified as a private foundation.

We wish to acknowledge the following foundations and corporations for their generosity in 2001. (Individuals are recognized in our *Voices* newsletter).

Foundations

Albert J. Speh, Jr. and Claire R. Speh Foundation
Arie & Ida Crown Memorial
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Donald Learner Family Foundation
Ford Foundation
Francis Beidler Charitable Trust
Jamie & Marshall Field Foundation
Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Chicago Community Trust
The Harris Foundation
W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation
Woods Fund of Chicago
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Coporations

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Aon Corporation
Ariel Capital Management
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Bank of America Illinois
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The above list does not include corporations who made inkind contributions toward our special events. If you are not listed and believe you should be or are listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and send a note of correction to our Development Department. Corrections will appear in subsequent publications.

Contributions to Voices for Illinois Children may be made in cash or in the form of securities, real estate or other property. Donors may restrict gifts to specific programs or to our General Endowment Fund, or may make contributions for general purposes.

For those wishing to help us meet our future needs, bequests of money, securities or property are tax deductible under federal estate laws. For further information on ways to support our work or to receive a copy of the complete financial statement, please contact:

Jim Perry
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Voices for Illinois Children
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Financial Statements

Statement of Support, Revenue, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance for the year ending December 31, 2001.

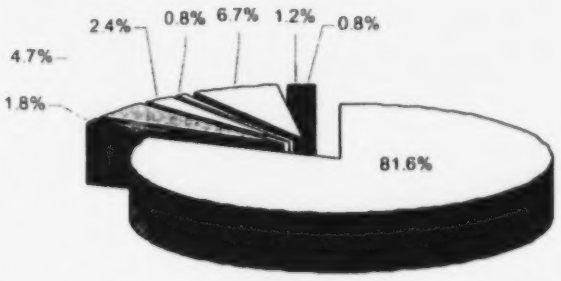
Support and Revenue	2001
Contributions:	
Foundations	2,565,800
Corporations	55,438
Other Grants	147,213
Individuals	76,638
Directors	25,870
Special Events	210,515
Other Revenue:	
Interest and Investment Income	38,216
Miscellaneous	25,566
Total Contributed Support and Revenue	3,145,256

Expenses	
General and Administrative	104,828
Fund Raising	299,954
Program Services	2,754,775
Total Expenses	3,159,557
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES	(14,301)

Support and Revenue

2001 Income

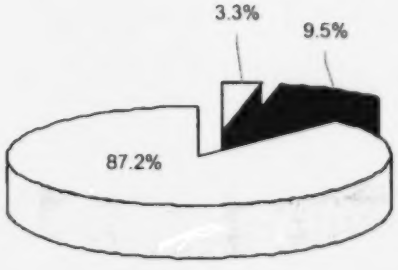
Foundations	81.6%
Corporations	1.8%
Other Grants	4.7%
Individuals	2.4%
Directors	0.8%
Special Events	6.7%
Interest and Investment Income	1.2%
Miscellaneous	0.8%
Total	**100.0%**



Expenses

2001 Expenses

General and Administrative	3.3%
Fund Raising	9.5%
Program Services	87.2%
Total	**100.0%**



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